

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, notice is hereby given for the following meeting of the:

***Arlington School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 1, 2016
4:30 PM***

Community Relations Subcommittee

*Arlington High School
School Committee Room
869 Mass Avenue, 6th Floor
Arlington, MA 02474*

Open Meeting

Approval of draft minutes

Calendar Survey - Second Read

Planning for other Forums, coffees, etc.

Outreach to the community about Middle School models

Adjournment

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair; which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Stated times and time amounts, listed in parenthesis, are the estimated amount of time for that particular agenda item. Actual times may be shorter or longer depending on the time needed to fully explore the topic.

Submitted by Jennifer Susse, Chair of Subcommittee



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Approval of draft minutes

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
Minutes	Community_Relations_Minutes_1_28.docx	draft minutes 1 28 2016

Community Relations Subcommittee Minutes

Thursday, January 28th

Present: SC: Jennifer Susse, Cindy Starks, Judson Pierce, Bill Hayner
APS: Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Dr. Laura Chesson
Other: Elaina Jakubiak, Greg Watt, Amy Marcoman, Kate Leary

The meeting was called to order at 5:07

Motion to approve minutes by Mr. Pierce, seconded by Ms. Starks. Minutes unanimously approved.

We began by discussing the suggestion made by the Enrollment Task Force that we revisit the district lines and buffer zones. The committee reaffirmed the commitments that were made last time we redistricted—specifically to keep grandfathering for existing students, keep families together, and have buffer zone decisions apply to new students only.

Dr. Bodie did not think that buffer zone expansions would make a huge difference for next year, though she could see it helping in the future. She thought we could wait a year. Dr. Bodie suggested that we might want to expand the Stratton/Bishop buffer zone after their renovation. Ms. Starks suggested that there is a benefit to expanding the Hardy/Thompson buffer zone. Dr. Bodie thought that an expansion might allow us to sometimes have only 7 kindergarten classrooms in East Arlington rather than 8. Dr. Bodie stressed that under the current arrangement a large percentage of families living in buffer zones get their first choice, also that fears about the buffer zones affecting property values have not been realized.

Dr. Chesson mentioned that we have a new registration process that should give us more information about incoming families.

Mr. Pierce emphasized that were we to redistrict we should make a better effort to communicate with the public. Last time parents felt that redistricting was “dropped on them,” which created a lot of uncertainty and trepidation.

Ms. Starks talked about the purported “empty classrooms”. During the H.S. rebuild we will need to put the pre-school somewhere. The pre-school is seven classes.

Greg Watt, a parent on the previous redistricting committee, is worried that the Thompson decision will hinge on decisions about redistricting. Wanted to know how we can move forward to convince Fincom that we need an addition at Thompson.

Dr. Bodie responded that if Fincom thought we were going to redistrict they would want to delay the decision on Thompson.

Ms. Susse emphasized that we are talking about serious tax increases and we need to show the community that we have done everything possible.

Amy Marcoman, a parent, emphasized that the number one priority is to keep walkable schools. Maintain sense of community by preserve neighborhood schools.

Kate Leary, a Hardy parent, offered that Hardy parents are comfortable with expanding buffer zones if there is grandfathering.

We then moved on to the presentations that would be made on PARCC and Common Core and how it would be publicized. Ms. Starks suggested that we create a FAQ on our website about the differences between MCAS and PARCC.

Finally, we agreed that Ms. Susse would work with Linda Hanson, AEA Rep, to create a survey on possible calendar changes.

6:15 Mr. Pierce moved to adjourn.



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Calendar Survey - Second Read

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▣ Second Reading	Survey_2_29_2016.docx	Survey 2 29 2016

Survey Questions for Parents and Teachers

For the past few years there have been conversations about changes to the school calendar that would have the school year end earlier in June. These conversations always came too late in the year. We have learned that parents and educators make plans for summer work, travel, and other personal commitments well in advance. This year we wanted to have the conversation and get comprehensive feedback from parents and educators with sufficient lead time for everyone to plan appropriately if the feedback indicates a strong desire for a different schedule. This survey will be given out to educators and parents in March of 2016, and may (but may not) result in changes to the school calendar in the **2017-2018** school year and beyond. Please know that your feedback is important to this process and will be given due consideration.

Parents: Please limit your responses to this survey to one per family.

Problem: School Year ending too late in June

Some years, due to snow days and a late Labor Day, students are in school until almost the end of June. This schedule can interfere with summer plans for families, and late June days are seen as less productive by educators for effective learning conditions.

Please answer the following questions to help inform the conversation for the **2017-2018** school year and beyond. Please indicate your level of support for each proposed change with a number from 1-5, with 1 expressing weak support, 5 expressing the highest level of support, and a 3 indicating that you are neutral.

1. The current calendar has students beginning on the first Tuesday after Labor Day and school ending after the requisite 180 school days, including any snow days. Does the current school calendar work for your family? (1 indicates dissatisfaction, 3 is neutral, and 5 indicates strong satisfaction.)
2. Please indicate your level of support for each of the following options that would ensure an earlier end to the school year. (1 indicates weak support, 3 is neutral, and 5 indicates strong support.)
 - a. Starting school before Labor Day (explored further in question #3 below)
 - b. Starting school before Labor Day only when Labor Day occurs after September 4th.
 - c. Cutting into April vacation when snow days push school to the last week of June
 - d. Merging February and April vacation (potentially difficult to implement unilaterally)
 - e. None of the above - I prefer to leave the calendar as is
3. One scenario for a pre-Labor Day start to the school year is the following. Please indicate your support for this scenario. (1 indicates weak support, 3 is neutral, and 5 indicates strong support.)

Monday before Labor Day Teacher Day	Tuesday before Labor Day Teacher Day	Wednesday before Labor Day Day 1 for Students	Thursday before Labor Day Day 2 for Students	Friday before Labor Day No School Day
--	---	--	---	--

Elementary Early Release Day Schedule - Elementary Parents and Teachers Only

4. Currently, the weekly early release day at the elementary level takes place on Tuesday. For elementary school-aged parents and/or teachers only, please let us know your preference by choosing one of the following:

☐ Tuesday works for me
☐ Move to Monday
☐ Move to Wednesday
☐ Move to Thursday
☐ No preference

High School Start Time - Middle School and High School Parents, and High School Teachers Only

5. The American Academy of Pediatrics recently issued a recommendation that High School start times should be no earlier than 8:30 AM to allow adolescents to get the sleep they need. The current AHS start time is 8:00. For Middle and High School parents and/or AHS teachers only, would you favor making the High School start time later? (1 indicates weak support, 3 is neutral, and 5 indicates strong support.)

- a. Keep the current start time
- b. Move the start time to 8:30 if all other Middlesex schools do the same (to alleviate problems with athletic and scholastic competitions)
- c. Move the start time to 8:30 regardless of what the other schools do

6. Demographic Info (please check all that apply)

I am the parent of a:

- Preschool student/s
- Elementary student/s
- Middle School student/s
- High School student/s

For teachers....I teach in the following setting:

- Preschool
- Elementary School
- Ottoson
- Arlington High School
- Multiple Schools/Levels

7. Please let us know if you have any additional comments on the school calendar.

Timeline:

Community Relations Meets on 3/1 to amend and approve the survey

Get SC approval for survey on 3/10

Send to parents on 3/21 - leave open for two weeks until Sunday, 4/3 at midnight.

Linda will send out via AEA communication network with same timeline in mind.